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**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
P.O. Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

A. Background

BLM Office: Kremmling Field Office

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: _____

Number: DOI-BLM-CO-120-2010-0016-CX

Proposed Action Title/Type: Willow Creek Sanitation Harvest Sale

Location of Proposed Action: T. 2 N., R. 77 W., Section 11 and 12; Grand County, Colorado;
6th Principal Meridian.

Description of Proposed Action:

The C Lazy U Ranch (hereafter referred to as: C Lazy U or the ranch) contacted the Kremmling Field Office in the fall of 2008. The ranch was concerned about dead lodgepole pine stands located on public lands administered by the BLM within or adjacent to ranch boundaries. Although these forested stands are primarily comprised of mature lodgepole pine, other tree species, mainly aspen and subalpine fir, are present. A recent cruise found that there was 99% mortality in the mature lodgepole pine. The ranch has implemented forest management treatments on their lands to salvage dead timber, reduce hazardous fuels, and promote regeneration of lodgepole pine. The ranch has immediate concerns for the BLM parcels that are within .5 miles of their guest ranch. The ranch has also surveyed their land for development right up against these dead pine stands.

The BLM is proposing to use mechanical treatment to harvest dead, currently infested and beetle/disease susceptible trees in one unit that is approximately 47 acres in size (see map). The mechanical treatment would be accomplished through a sale of the volume to be harvested. This sale would most likely be negotiated with the ranch since there is no public access to the sale area. Trees that would likely be wind-thrown, if left standing after harvest, would be cut as well (mostly large subalpine fir). The primary purpose of the project is to remove dead and dying trees to reduce the buildup of hazardous fuels on public lands adjacent to private lands while, at the same time, retaining live healthy trees that remain on the site. Mechanical treatment would also facilitate the regeneration of the unit.

All lodgepole pine trees that are 7 inches or greater DBH (diameter breast height), as well as, other conifer trees that are 7 inches or greater DBH and meet the above criteria, would be designated by the BLM for removal. Dead or beetle-hit lodgepole pine trees that are 5 to 6 inches DBH would also be designated. Lodgepole pine trees that are 4 inches DBH or less, and other conifer trees that are less than 7 inches DBH, may be removed by the Purchaser or in a subsequent treatment if they are dead, disease/insect infested, or otherwise damaged. Healthy live lodgepole pine less than 7 inches DBH and other conifer trees, as well as aspen, would be retained where feasible. No trees would be harvested within a flagged buffer around the hawk nest location displayed on the enclosed map.

The spring, summer and fall months are the ranch's busiest seasons with numerous guests utilizing the facilities. The access road to the sale area passes through ranch facilities and is immediately adjacent to several ranch buildings. Harvest operations would only be conducted during winter months and not during any of the "regular" big game hunting seasons to minimize impacts on ranch operations. Operating outside of the winter months could occur but only with agreement from the ranch and approval of the Authorized Officer.

Barring some unforeseen event, this will be a negotiated sale with C Lazy U. If, for some reason, the purchaser is someone other than C Lazy U, these additional design criteria would be included in the contract as requested by the ranch:

- 1) That all logs hauled out are taken out only during times when there are no guests.
- 2) That all crews do not enter the ranch prior to 7:30 am and leave prior to 5:00 pm.
- 3) That all burning activities be coordinated so as not to interfere with guest operations at the ranch.
- 4) That all roads on C Lazy U property remain open at all times.
- 5) That all access points that cross C Lazy U property are reclaimed prior to the sale being closed.
- 6) That the purchaser would be required to show proof of insurance and list C Lazy U as additional insured on policy.

Some temporary or snow road construction is anticipated, although the Purchaser may decide to skid longer distances instead. Two existing native surface road spurs that branch off of the existing private road would provide access to the unit. About 1.8 miles of the existing private road would be used up to where it joins the most southern native surface road spur.

Approximately 0.42 miles of temporary roads may be constructed on private and public lands from these spurs. If temporary roads are constructed they would be closed following harvest operations. Temporary roads would be outsloped, and roads and landings would be scarified, as necessary. Temporary roads, landings and, as necessary, major skid trails, would be seeded with a BLM-approved mixture of forbs and grasses by the Purchaser. Temporary roads, or portions thereof, would also be slashed-in.

- 1) All temporary road construction would only occur during periods with dry soil conditions.
- 2) Construction of snow roads would not involve soil disturbance.

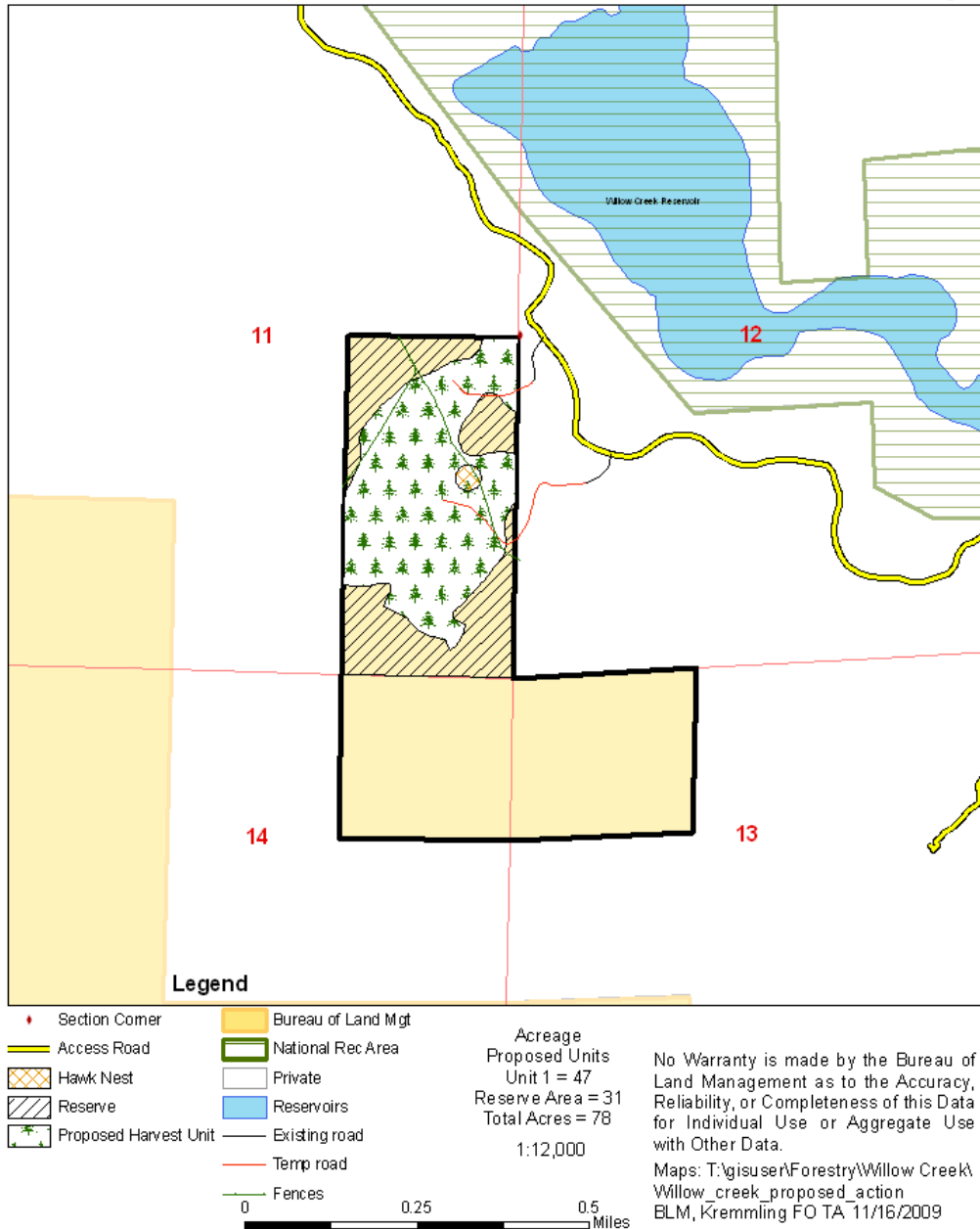
3) Winter logging would occur only when ground is frozen.

The existing private road is currently maintained on a regular basis and is a graveled surface. Frequency of maintenance may need to be increased with initiation of logging operations. Operations would be done with standard ground-based commercial logging equipment.

Cull logs and tops of trees would be offered for sale as biomass. Remaining slash would be piled and burned, placed on temporary roads, or lopped and scattered. Following the completion of harvest, piles would be burned during the winter by the BLM when adequate snow depth is present and consistent with burn plan requirements and burning permit stipulations.



Willow Creek Proposed Sanitation Harvest Area



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B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD) Date Approved/Amended: December 19, 1984: Updated February 1999

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions(s):

Decision Number/Page: II-6, page 10

Decision Language: “To manage all productive forest land that is suitable for producing a variety of forest products on a sustained yield basis. This action will create a healthy forest environment through continued forest management practices.”

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.0, Section C (9), “*Commercial and non-commercial sanitation harvest of trees to control insects or disease not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 miles of temporary road construction*”.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM2 apply.

I considered the size of the project and the design features built into the proposed action in reaching my decision that the proposed action would have no potential for significant impacts.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

| Name | Title | Area of Responsibility | Date Review Completed |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Richard Johnson | Rangeland Management Specialist | Vegetation and Range Mgt | 11/25/09 |
| Megan McGuire | Wildlife Biologist | T&E Species and Wildlife | 12/4/2009 |
| Bill B. Wyatt | Fire Archaeologist | Cultural Resources | 12-15-09 |
| Bill B. Wyatt | Fire Archaeologist | Tribal Consultation | 3-24-09 |
| Frank G. Rupp | Archaeologist | Paleontology | 11/17/2009 |
| Paula Belcher | Hydrologist | Soil, Water, Air, and Riparian | 12-07-09 1/13/2010 |

D. Signature

Authorizing Official:____/s/Dave Stout_____ Date: ____3/9/2010_____
(Signature)

Name: __David Stout_____
Title: __Field Manager_____

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

Kenneth Belcher
Forester
P O Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459
970-724-3065

DECISION RECORD
CX #DOI-BLM-CO-120-2010-0016

DECISION: It is my decision to authorize the Proposed Action as described in the attached CX.

This decision is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and the Clean Water Act. This decision is also in conformance with the LUP and other applicable laws, regulations and policies.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action and have determined that it does not represent an extraordinary circumstance and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

RATIONALE: The proposed action to implement the Willow Creek Sanitation Harvest Sale and use mechanical treatment to harvest dead, currently infested and beetle/disease susceptible trees was chosen because it meets the purpose and need identified in the analysis and is in compliance with the LUP and other applicable laws, regulations and policies.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ David Stout

DATE SIGNED: 3/9/2010